

new matter is added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection.

II. THE CLAIMS SATISFY 35 U.S.C. § 112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

Claim 87 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. This rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicants' respectfully submit that the above-outlined amendments to Claim 87 fully obviate the grounds for the rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

III. THE CLAIMS DEFINE PATENTABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Claims 82-89 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 5,599,305 to Hermann et al. ("Hermann"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Hermann discloses a large diameter introducer catheter 12 having a hemostatis valve assembly 18 located at one end. The valve assembly 18 includes a housing 36 having inlet and outlet ports 40 and 42. A foam insert 38 is disposed within the housing 36. The foam insert 38 includes an open axial lumen 52. Surgical components are inserted through the lumen 52.

By contrast, amended Claim 82 is directed to an introducer sheath device for use during a surgical procedure for introducing surgical components into a vessel into a patient. The introducer sheath device includes a housing having a passageway that accommodates the passage of the surgical components therein. The introducer sheath device further includes a sealing assembly for preventing the loss of blood from the vessel during the insertion and subsequent removal of surgical components during the surgical procedure. The sealing assembly includes a sealing cavity. Unlike Hermann, the sealing cavity according to the present invention is filled with a biocompatible sealing material, which forms a seal around the surgical components as the components are inserted through the sealing material and removed from the introducer sheath device during the surgical procedure. The surgical components extend through and contact the sealing material; rather than a preformed opening, as disclosed in Hermann.

Applicants respectfully submit that Hermann does not disclose, teach or suggest an introducer sheath having the claimed sealing arrangement. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

IV. CONCLUSION

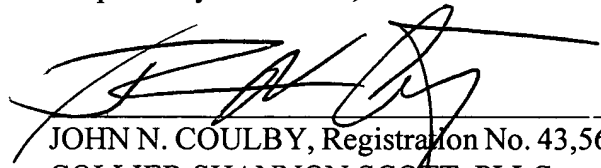
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims define subject matter patentable over the prior art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge and deficiency or credit any overpayment to deposit account number 03-2469.

Date: June 20, 2000



Respectfully Submitted,


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